



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

September 2016



**Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics**

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## **USDA Climate Hub Building Block: Conservation of Sensitive Lands**

USDA Climate Hubs are working with producers, ranchers, pasture and forest landowners to effectively partner in ways to help reduce climate change. To aid in this partnership, USDA established the 10 Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry.

One such Building Block is the "Conservation of Sensitive Lands". The term "sensitive lands" denotes soils and landscapes that are valuable due to properties (e.g., high organic matter, wet hydrology) and/or function (e.g., wildlife habitat, filtration, and hydrologic storage). Typical examples of these soils are organic rich histosols, floodplains, or wetlands along riparian areas. Properties and functions of these soils are easily disrupted from agricultural or urban land use.

Sensitive lands that are used for agricultural production can be protected by changes in land use (long-term cover). This reduction in land use intensity can provide multiple environmental benefits, including substantial green house gas (GHG) mitigation that occurs as carbon is sequestered or preserved in soils and vegetation. When land is removed from crop production, several activities—including tillage, nitrogen fertilization, and energy use—are substantially reduced or eliminated, generating additional GHG mitigation.

FSA and NRCS are committed to identifying these sensitive lands and encouraging landowners, farmers, and ranchers to voluntarily adopt conservation

systems--using financial and technical assistance--to generate GHG benefits. To read more about Conservation of Sensitive Lands, click the following link: [http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate\\_change/building\\_blocks/4\\_SensitiveLands.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/building_blocks/4_SensitiveLands.pdf)

For more information about the USDA Climate Hubs click here: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>

## **Breaking New Ground**

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

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<b>Office Hours: Monday—Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm</b>	
<b>Next County Committee Meeting Dates:</b> <u>Hawaii County</u> - October 14, 2016 at 8:00 am <u>Honolulu County</u> - October 21, 2016 at 3:00 pm <u>Kauai County</u> - October 18, 2016 at 9:00 am <u>Maui County</u> - October 20, 2016 at 8:30 am <u>Guam County</u> - December 7, 2016 at 9:00 am <u>CNMI County</u> - December 7, 2016 at 9:00 am  Contact the County Office to confirm meeting date and time, as budget constraints may limit the County Committee's ability to meet each month. A list of County Offices, contact numbers and addresses may be found at: <a href="http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf">http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf</a>	

## FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has launched a new tool to provide farmers and ranchers with remote access to their personal farm information using their home computers. Farmers and ranchers can now view, print or export their personal farm data all without visiting an FSA county office.

The program, known as **FSAfarm+**, provides you with secure access to view your personal FSA data, such as base and yields, Conservation Reserve Program data, other conservation program acreage, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation status information, field boundaries, farm imagery, name and address details, contact information and membership interest and shares in the operation. This data will be available in real time, at no cost to the producer and allow operators and owners to export and print farm records, including maps. Producers also can electronically share their data with a crop insurance agent from their own personal computer.

Farm operators and owners first will need "Level 2 eAuthentication" to access the webportal. This level of security ensures that personal information is protected for each user. Level 2 access can be obtained by going to [www.eauth.usda.gov](http://www.eauth.usda.gov), completing the required information and then visiting your local FSA office to finalize access.

For more information on **FSAfarm+**, the customer self-service portal, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, click <http://offices.usda.gov>.

<b>Interest Rates for September 2016</b>	
Farm Operating Loans	2.125 %
Microloans	2.125 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.125%
Farm Ownership Microloans	3.125%
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.125 %

## Faces of Farming in American Samoa



The American Samoa Farm Service Agency Field office held a “Recordkeeping for New and Existing Borrowers” workshop on August 24, 2016 to review recordkeeping for farm loans and the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) in addition to offering guidance on how to prepare to file applications for the Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program. Farm Loan Program Chief Steve Bazzell was in American Samoa for servicing of the American Samoa portfolio and was also able to meet with the producers. (Pictured 3<sup>rd</sup> from the right)

Hats off to Farm Loan Program Technician Joe Uiagalelei (pictured far left) for spearheading this Effort. Agricultural Specialist Josie Malepeai Lealaso-la presented on behalf of Farm Programs. (Pictured second from the left along with some of the new borrowers that attended the training.)

## Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address or zip code or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming

operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

## Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

## Deadline to Submit Documentation for the Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP)

November 4, 2016 is the deadline to submit to the Farm Service Agency County Office documentation for the Reimbursement of Transportation Costs Payment Program.

Dates to Remember	
November 4, 2016	Deadline to submit documentation for the 2016 Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program
November 7, 2016	County Committee Election Ballots will be mailed to eligible producers
December 1, 2016	NAP Insurance Deadline for Forage
December 5, 2016	Deadline to return County Committee Election Ballots
December 13, 2016	Deadline for Hawaii County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought
December 20, 2016	Deadline for Maui County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought

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